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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9.

Dry Farming in New Mexico.

(By Peter Yockey.)

It is impossible to thoroughly
treat a subject like this, in a
short article, as this of necessity
must be. I will therefore take
up a few of the more important
factors.

"Dry farming" is a term used
to distinguish farming without ir-
rigation. It is, however, a mis-
leading term, because it leads
many to think it means farming
with little or no moisture, which
is not the case. It means farm-
ing under arid conditions and
saving and saving all the moisture
that falls to produce good crops.
Under the best dry farming
methods it is possible to raise
fair crops every year and bumper
crops under the most favora-
ble conditions of the arid sec-
tions. In most of the arid and
semi-arid sections, sufficient rain
falls to raise good crops, on the
same land every alternate year
and frequently every year, if the
moisture is all conserved by in-
teligent cultivation.

This is true of the Pecos Valley
SAVING THE MOISTURE.

Saving the moisture is one of
the most important factors in
"dry farming," and mainly upon
this factor depends the success
or the failure of the dry farmer.

Whenever you have any pre-
cipitation, either rain or snow,
the first thing to do, as soon as
the surface of the ground is dry
enough not to bake when it is
worked, is to disk or harrow the
land, as the case may demand.

If the ground has been packed
on the surface you should double
disk by lapping the disk one
half; to form a dust mulch on
the surface. Double disk-
ing more thoroughly pulverizes the
top soil and cuts out the ridge
left in single disk-
ing. This mulch
breaks up the capillary con-
nection between the soil and the air
and holds the water in the ground
as well as a blanket of cloth or
straw.

This mulch of dirt should be
maintained by harrowing after
every rain or snow to keep the
crust broken and the top of the
soil to the depth of 2 1/2 to 4
inches fine and dry for a protec-
tion to hold the moisture. As
long as you keep this fine dirt
mulch, (not a dust mulch,) no
water can run off, for the soil in
this condition will readily absorb
it, though the showers be torren-
tial and the land a little sloping.
If you have maintained this con-
dition and have held all the mois-
ture that has fallen you can plow
when you get ready.

FLOWING.

Plowing next to moisture is
most important factor of "Dry
Farming." It is not merely a
matter of plowing any old time,
regardless of the condition of the
soil, but depends upon the con-
dition of the soil and somewhat
upon the time of the year, al-
though less depends upon the
time than the physical condition
of the soil. Plowing can be done
at almost any time when the
ground contains enough moisture
to crumble and to thereby form
little granules of soil. The best
depth to plow depends upon the
tools one has at command for
firming the lower portion of the
furrow. Of course, the deeper
you plow, the more plant food
be liberated, in soils where there
is no hard pan near the top of
ground, but you must thorough-
ly pack the lower portion of the
furrow. If the bottom of the
furrow is not firm-
ed there will be air cavities
and your soil will dry out as deep
as it was plowed. The roots of
plants cannot penetrate air cavi-
ties nor dry soil around them and
thus a large part of the plant
food is unavailable; hence the
small yield so common in arid
sections. If you have no packer

do not plow deeper than 5 or 6
inches, then harrow with the
harrow well weighted and the
teeth slanted back. This will
pack the lower portion of the
furrow. If you have a packer to
follow the plow, (and all plowed
in the forenoon should be packed
before going into dinner,) you
may plow 8 to 10 inches or deeper,
generally speaking, however,
8 inches is most satisfactory, if
the packer is well weighted. As
mentioned above plowing can be
done at any time when the soil is
in proper condition. But for
promoting nitrification, the best
time to plow is in June or July;
when the greatest chemical pro-
cess is going on in the soil and
vegetable matter most readily
decomposes, producing the hum-
us which is so important to the
best physical condition of the
soil.

PACKING.

Packing has a very important
place in dry farming. The packer
should follow the plow. All
that is plowed during half the
day should be packed before
leaving the field. The packer is a
tool with from 10 to 16 wedged-
faced wheels which pack the
plowed land both downward and
laterally, and leaves the bottom
in a fine but firm condition. Then
the harrow should follow the
packer to smooth the surface and
pack the soil in the grooves left
by the packer, to within 2 1/2 to
3 inches of the surface; which
must be maintained fine and loose
for a dust mulch to hold the
moisture. There is no use to try
to pack soil that has been plowed
too dry; while it may improve it,
you must not expect good results
from such conditions.

The physical condition of the
soil must be such that it contains
exactly the proper amount of
moisture and of air. The soil
must be fine and firm so that the
little rootlets may permeate ev-
ery inch of the soil. Under proper
physical conditions every inch
of earth is penetrated. No par-
ticle of dry soil gives up any
plant food to the little roots and
any lump of dirt cannot give up
any plant food, whether wet or
not, if it is hard enough that the
little roots cannot penetrate it.
You will readily see the impor-
tance of maintaining the best
possible condition of your soil.
Any soil that is deficient in hum-
us does give enough plant food
to the crops. It runs together
very badly and does not work up
in the desired friable condition.
You must always keep in mind
the physical condition of your
soil, making it first, and the me-
chanical condition second. If
your soil contains the proper am-
ount of water, air and humus it
makes no difference what you do
to get these properties. When
you have the proper physical con-
dition you are sure of success.

WATER AND CAPILLARITY.

Water is held in the soil by
capillarity and the amount that
it may hold is governed by the
texture of the soil and its depth.
The firmer the soil the greater
the water holding capacity and
this is why we require the fine,
firm condition. Water is held in
film form around the little parti-
cles of soil and is drawn to the
surface exactly as the oil is
drawn to the flame in the lamp.
As fast as the water at the sur-
face evaporates water from below
raises up by capillarity to take its
place, hence the necessity of the
mulch to break the capillary con-
nection between the soil and the
air. The soils in the Pecos Val-
ley are of a sufficient depth and
fineness to make it one of the
best of water holding soils and
very adaptable to dry farming.
The soil should hold water by
capillarity to a depth of 6 to 8
feet. At 12 1/2 per cent to 18
3/4 per cent your soil should con-
tain from 4 to 12 inches of water.
The smaller amount would pro-
duce from six hundred to eight
hundred pounds of beans per
acre and the larger would pro-
duce 50 to 60 bushels of corn per
acre, etc., if none were allowed
to escape by evaporation, which
can be almost entirely prevented
by intelligent cultivation. It
would take all of the average
season in this section to secure
this amount of moisture. When
you once have this amount stored
to begin your crop with you need
never fear failure with proper
cultivation. When you once have
this amount stored and your crop
growing and more rain coming,
perhaps enough for the present
needs of your crop, you will al-
ways be sure of plenty moisture
to tide you over that 2 weeks to
2 months drouth which we are
almost sure to experience at some
time during the crop season.
Under such conditions we can
reasonably expect the maximum
yields, that is; 500 to 800 pounds
of beans, 1 to 3 tons of sorghum,
40 to 60 bushels of corn, etc.,

per acre. And we ought reason-
ably expect to grow such crops
every year on the same land for
3 to 5 years if the seasons are as
good the last year was. But
if we have a season like the
present one we should still have
enough moisture to mature a
fairly good crop and summer till
our land the next season
(continued next week.)

The High and Dry Farmers.

Frank N. Page in Field and Farm.

The truth about the arid land
is not believed by thousands of
people who have been induced to
settle on them through luring
advertisements, locators and
townsite boomers. The real truth
comes to the settle only when he
finds that he is producing no cash
crop and then it gradually dawns
upon him in a desultory sort of
way that he must have livestock
of some kind to eat up that which
he does produce. On the irri-
gated lands or on that can be
placed under irrigation—the
condition is different for where
the fields can be watered a cash
crop can always be produced.

Many parts of New Mexico
and arid lands in other states
have been settled upon by men
of little means and in many cases
single women are holding claims,
borrowing water to use, hiring
their plowing done, etc. These
poor people have a right to the
land but what are they going to
do with it when they commute
or exist there the allotted time
to secure final proof? When the
lands are not under a system of
irrigation forage crop only can
be produced as a sure thing and
animals must be procured to con-
sume the product or it is wasted.

New Mexico and Arizona in
many parts is a pastoral country
only and the rich grasses must
be utilized in those places where
crop cannot be produced. Hence
sheep have been and will con-
tinue to be the wealth of the arid
countries and also cattle and
horses where they can be proper-
ly cared for. But for men and
women to settle on high and dry
lands and expect to make a living
by farming alone, or by holding
down claims with the expecta-
tion of making a stake by selling
them after their patents are
renewed is an illusion, however
hard it is for them to come to
that conclusion.

Nisbet's Report.

Experimental Gardener
Makes Full Report of
Results Obtained During
Past Season.

The past season has been a
very interesting one for me. I
came to Fort Sumner in March
feeling confident that with proper
application of water and the
proper harmonizing of nature's
elements the soil of the Fort
Sumner Valley would produce
great crops—in this I have not
been disappointed. I farmed
for years in the San Luis and in
the Arkansas Valleys in Colorado
and, with the possible exception
of Irish potatoes and cabbage in
the San Luis Valley, the soil
hereabouts is far superior to any
I have farmed. The sandy loam
here is easily handled and is
adapted to a great variety of
crops.

I planted ever twenty varieties
of vegetables including Irish and
sweet potatoes, beets, onions,
cabbage, tomatoes and celery.

Without exception they have
done remarkably well and any
farmer in the valley is absolutely
safe in planting them as com-
mercial crops. An exceptional
success has been made here of
Sweet potatoes and celery.

Either of these crops planted
alone will make good money for
the grower and I believe better
money can be made from them
than from any other vegetable
crops we can plant. This is be-
yond doubt a country beautifully
adapted to sweet potatoes and
celery.

The past season has settled
beyond all doubt that we have
here the soil and the proper
climatic conditions for the suc-
cessful cultivation of the cantaloupe.
I sent samples to various
eastern firms including M. O.
Goggins & Co., Pittsburg, Pa.
who handle great quantities of
the Rocky Ford product. Mr.
Goggins letter was published in
the Review last week. He in-
forms us that he can handle the
product of 500 acres next season.

He says in part "As to the
quality of this stock, it was
everything that could be desired.
"If you can produce a cantalopes
of this grade we do not think
there is any question but what
you can find profitable markets
for your crops". An expert in
Colorado has pronounced the
Fort Sumner cantaloupe superior
to the famous Rocky Ford fruit.
We can market our crop three
week ahead of the Las Cruces or
Colorado crop and obtain the high
priced market. The cantaloupe
deserves the lead among every-
thing in this valley. It should
be the one thing for which Fort
Sumner should be known. Money
can be made from other crops
but every farmer owes it to him-
self and the community at large
to plant some cantalopes and
help make a name abroad for the
Fort Sumner product. It means
better shipping facilities, wider
advertising, higher prices and
money in your pocket.

FRUIT

Little can be learned during a
single season of the possibilities
for fruit culture, however, from
a general survey of the soil, cli-
mate and water I am satisfied
that we have a great fruit rais-
ing valley. Comparisons with
the great Grand Junction coun-
try, Canon City, Colo., or our
neighboring project, Roswell,
give us all the best of it. Here
we will be able to add grapes to
our list of fruits and it should
make one of our leading crops.
What little advance has been
made this season in the orchards
in the valley and in the few trees
I have in the garden, confirms
my impressions and gives me, if
possible, greater confidence in
the future of the Fort Sumner
fruit business.

MARKET

I found a ready market for all
the garden truck I raised and
could have marketed four times
as much in nearby towns alone.
Clovis and Amarillo afforded an
excellent market that could not
be supplied with but a small pro-
portion of what they wanted.
We will be in a position next
year to feed the Cut-Off and ship
into the Panhandle of Texas.
The Territory around us wants
our products and will pay good
prices. I do not know of a sin-
gle item on which there is danger
of over production.

IN CONCLUSION

In spite of thirty years experi-
ence I find that each season
brings something new and the
past season has taught me to
make many little changes to im-
prove not only the yield but the
quality of our crops.

As the growing season draws
to a close it is wise to review the
years' work and profit by our er-
rors. I will be glad to hear from
others in the Valley through the
the columns of the Review.

The following couples drove
over to LaLande Sunday, Miss
Adelina Jaramillo and J. Ollie
Wellborn, Miss Daisy Aldrich
and A. J. Gilliam, Miss Ella
Gerhardt and L. C. VanHecke.
The trip was intended primarily
to give the participants an oppor-
tunity to attend services at the
Holliness camp meeting now in
progress at LaLande. It seems
a crying shame that our religi-
ously inclined young people must
travel six miles over a sandy
road to attend church on a Sun-
day evening.

J. L. MAXWELL

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